

ANTI-CHRISTIAN

PART II

CONTINUANCE AND END OF SATAN'S ANTI-CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORS

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof (Matt. 13:31, 32).

It took Satan about three and one-half centuries to bring the Church completely within his sphere of governmental control. Then, what is referred to as "The Dark Ages" (an expression, not "ages" per se) in Church history rapidly ensued, lasting for over one thousand years; and even though the Reformation (16th century, with a subsequent restoration of great prophetic truths [17th-20th centuries, attaining fruition in the 19th and 20th centuries]), followed "The Dark Ages," the Church as a whole has never really departed from the position it began to assume during the time of Constantine. Segments of Christendom, at times, have stood apart, *but not the Church as a whole*; and this continues to be the case even today.

It Becometh a Tree

The parable of the grain of mustard seed in Matt. 13:31, 32 reflects upon the position in which the Church has found itself since the time of Constantine. *The mustard seed*, "the least of all seeds," was to germinate, grow, and become "the greatest among herbs." However, the mustard seed in the parable germinated, experienced *an unnatural growth*, and became "a tree." Not only this, but following the ger-

mination and growth of the mustard seed into a tree, "the birds of the air" came and *lodged in its branches*.

"A tree" in Scripture symbolizes a *national power*. In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, "trees" represent *nations* which sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel 4:10-12 refers to a vision of "a tree in the midst of the earth," having a *great height* which "reached unto heaven." The interpretation of the vision is given later in the chapter (vv. 20-22), and "the tree" is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon*. Babylon had grown strong, its greatness reached unto heaven, and its dominion reached to the ends of the earth.

Then in Luke 21:29-32, Christ not only referred to *the nation of Israel* under the symbolism of "a fig tree" (cf. Matt. 21:18, 19; 24:32), but He also referred to *Gentile nations* under the symbolism of "all the trees."

(Refer to Chapter VIII in the author's book, "Prophecy on Mount Olivet," for information on "the fig tree" and "all the trees.")

Also, refer to the author's book, "Mysteries of the Kingdom," for additional information on the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.)

There can be no question concerning Scripture identifying "trees" in a symbolic sense with *national powers*; and this fact, along with the fact that the grain of mustard seed (another symbol) germinated and subsequently experienced an unnatural growth, must be understood to correctly interpret Matt. 13:31, 32.

The next thing to note is the fact that after *the national power* appeared, "the birds of the air" found places to lodge *within that power*. Again, one is not left to his own understanding to ascertain the interpretation. In verse four, in the first of the seven parables in this chapter, "the fowls" came and devoured the individuals "sown by the wayside" (literal understanding derived from v. 19 [ref. ASV]; these are Christians sown at specific places in the world, with a view to their bringing forth fruit [ref. v. 8]). Then in verse nineteen, in the interpretation of this parable, "the fowls" from verse four are identified with "the wicked one."

The words "fowl" in verse four and "birds" in verse thirty-two are translations of the same word in the Greek text, and understanding these parables in the light of one another, the "birds" which found a place to rest in the branches of the tree can only be

identified with *the agents of Satan*. That is, after that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed germinated, took an unnatural growth, and became a world power, the agents of Satan simply moved in. Through *an unnatural growth*, following the germination of the grain of mustard seed, *the agents of Satan found a natural place to lodge*.

Now, note what must be looked upon as the overall interpretation, which will reveal the identity of that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed. Interpreted in the light of the two preceding parables (which are explained in the text), only one thing can be in view. The first two parables concern Satan's move against Christianity (not against Israel, for Christ had gone out of the house, down by the seaside [Matt. 13:1]), and it is no different in the third parable. The grain of mustard seed, the object of attack in the parable, can only represent the Church which, somewhere along the way, experienced an unnatural growth and became a world power, something it was not supposed to become at all. And there is only one place in history to which an individual can go to show the fulfillment of such an event.

This is what began to occur during the time of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, reaching its consummation in the latter part of the century when Christianity was declared to be *the official and only religion of the Roman Empire*.

The Church was wed to the world. The Church, through its association with a world power after this fashion, was looked upon as being *one with that power*; and Satan, with his agents, found it to be a *very natural thing to simply move in and begin exercising some measure of control*.

Note the sharp contrast between the work of Satan in verse four and his work in verse thirty-two. In the former verse, Satan devoured Christians (cf. I Peter 5:8, 9); but in the latter verse, there was no need for Satan to devour them. The Christians in this verse had joined his ranks, and *he, along with his agents, simply positioned himself among them*. They were no longer in a position to bring forth fruit through proclaiming a true witness concerning the kingdom; and he, as a consequence, simply left them alone.

It Remaineth a Tree

Within the scope of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, once a course of action had been taken,

there was no turning back (e.g., “till the whole was leavened” in the parable of the leaven [v. 33]); and once fruition had been attained, the text appears to clearly indicate that *no change would occur throughout the remainder of the dispensation in relation to that which had come to pass.*

This, then, leaves the final form given in the parable as that form which would carry through to the end of the dispensation. That is, once the mustard seed had germinated and grown into a tree (the final form revealed), it would, from all indication, *continue as a tree for the remainder of the dispensation.*

Not only so, but *the birds of the air would also remain in its branches (again, the final form revealed) for the remainder of the dispensation.* There is no intimation at all that, sometime during the course of the remainder of the dispensation, the tree could one day become a mustard bush — or anything else — possibly resulting in the birds of the air departing, etc. In fact, such a thought, aside from being contrary to sound interpretation within the scope of the parable, is contrary to any Scripture bearing upon the course of Christianity throughout the dispensation.

(The dispensation would end with Christendom completely leavened, as seen in the Matthew thirteen parables; or, presented another way in Scripture, the dispensation would end with Christendom in a Laodicean state [“...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”], as seen in Revelation chapter three.

And the Church at the end of the dispensation, during the day in which we live, is so blinded to the position which it is supposed to occupy that Christians forming these Churches have little to no understanding of that which has occurred and continues to occur, with the end result seen Luke 18:8:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [lit., ‘the faith’] upon the earth?”

“The faith” has a peculiar reference in the New Testament to the Word of the Kingdom; and the way in which the question is worded in the Greek text of Luke 18:8, a negative response is indicated. That is, when the Son of Man returns, he is not going to find “the faith” being taught in the Churches of the land, liberal and fundamental Churches alike [this is *the one place* where the two find common ground; *neither* will have anything to do with the Word of the Kingdom].)

Within the symbolism of “a tree” — from the time of Constantine to the present time — Christendom has found and continues to find itself exactly where Satan wants it. Christendom has been and continues to be associated with “a tree,” *a world power* (which would have to be *Gentile world power* during the present dispensation).

From Constantine until Today

Now, how does all of this continue from the time of Constantine even unto today? How, or in what manner, is Christianity still associated with Gentile world power, which would have to be the case with the continuing symbolism of the tree in Matt. 13:32?

The matter is evident on every hand, but it is something which is possibly *even more deceptive today than at any other time in history.* After all, the “leaven” which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 has been working for almost two millenniums, and Satan has been allowed the same length of time to sharpen the cutting edge of his master plan.

Over a period of hundreds and hundreds of years, Satan, in progressively carrying out his plans and purposes, has created such confusion that no segment of Christendom has escaped unscathed (cf. Luke 18:8). Those from the liberal wing and fundamental wing have, *both alike*, fallen prey to the wiles of Satan in the area of world government, as he has continued to foster the association of Christians with that symbolized by “a tree.”

The crux of the plan of Satan is to involve Christians *in the present kingdom*, an involvement which can only detract from the things in which they are supposed to be involved — things having to do with *the coming kingdom.* *The coming kingdom of Christ* is symbolized in Scripture by “a great mountain” or “a high mountain” (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:35; Matt. 16:28-17:5), and *the only escape* for Christians in the world today is to go “to the mountain.” In fact, it is, “Escape for thy life [‘soul’]” (Gen. 19:17).

There is no such thing as a Christian being actively involved in both “the tree” and “the great mountain.” When a Christian becomes interested in “the tree,” he loses interest in “the great mountain,” and vice versa.

Thus, the great deception of Satan revolves around his efforts to keep the Christians’ attention

centered on *the present “tree”* rather than upon *the coming “great mountain”*; and this deception has been present and effectively executed for hundreds of years.

One of the great cries one hears day after day after day over the religious radio stations and religious TV broadcasts, especially within what is recognized as “fundamental Christianity,” is the call for an increased association of Christians with world government. Christians on every hand are continually being exhorted to involve themselves within the political structure of this present world system. They are being exhorted to band together for purposes of becoming a powerful force or voice in the present system, and a Christian who doesn’t follow suit is looked down upon as being among the uninformed.

Again, it would *not* be “The Triumph of Christianity” should Christians find themselves controlling, after any fashion, Gentile world power today. In fact, as with the association of Christianity and Rome, beginning during the time of Constantine, it would be just the opposite. Modern-day Christian thought relating to the association of Christians with the state would not have been welcomed at all within the Church until at least the latter part of the second century. Then, by the fourth century, the thought of Christians associating themselves with the present government of the earth would have been right at home in the Church, as it continues to exist today.

Those individuals exhorting Christians to become involved in the political structure of this present world system are, in reality, encouraging Christians to *forsake their high calling and become involved in matters totally unrelated to their calling.* And for Christians to do this is for those Christians to involve themselves in affairs related to *the wrong kingdom — the present kingdom of Satan rather than the coming kingdom of Christ.*

Christians are to bide their time, keeping their eyes on the things having to do with *the coming kingdom of Christ*, not on the things having to do with *the present kingdom under Satan.* The former is about to be manifested, overthrow and destroy the latter, then become *a great mountain and fill the whole earth* (Dan. 2:35, 44, 45).

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

www.lampbroadcast.org